

MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES JULY 16, 2001

The meeting of the Commission was called to order by Chairman Bill O’Gara, with one member short of a quorum, at 1:05 P.M. at the Maine Emergency Medical Services conference room in Augusta with the following members present: Jay Bradshaw, Jeff Cammack, John Cannon, Al Godfrey, Jeff Maker, Bill O’Gara, Tom Parent, Jethro Pease, Dave Wacker and Steve Willis. Members Excused: Mike Albert, Jack Berry, Darrel Fournier, Ted Johnston, Randy Keep, Harty Norris and Michael Quint. Members absent: John Dean, Clifton Foster and Christine Savage. Also present were Susan Pinette (Staff) and guest Earle Welch, Jr., Wayne Asst. Fire Chief.

The minutes of the June 25, 2001 meeting were discussed.

Old Business

Members reported on progress on the development of the following sections of the Commission report to the Governor and Legislature as follows:

1. Steve Willis reported by handing out a sheet on training facilities needs. Jay Bradshaw reported that in the benchmarks section, EMS should be deleted as shown in the LD 936 Resolve. We are now dealing with only a State Fire Service Academy. (At this point Member John Dean arrived from another meeting and the Commission now had a quorum and could officially conduct business.) The Commission needs to develop a guide to present to local Fire Departments to survey their needs. The plan needs to be completed by April 1, 2002.
2. John Dean reported that at present work is under way and a report is not ready at this time. Over 300 questionnaires have been returned to date with more dribbling in.
7. Jethro Pease reported on the schedule put together by the Volunteer Recruitment and Retention sub-committee. We need to get feedback to the grassroots as well as surveying the local departments
8. John Cannon advised that his sub-committee is not ready to report at this time.
9. John Dean advised that who is a firefighter has to be defined. The sub-committee is working to develop a definition so that rules can be developed.
11. There was no report as no sub-committee members were present.

Steve Willis suggested that the sub-committee reports be fleshed out by the next meeting and that we need to establish benchmarks for completion at the August 13 meeting.

Susan Pinette discussed setting up a database for the Commission survey. She now has the surveys broken down by county in alphabetical order. A general discussion ensued on how to proceed. Susan will send out another letter and postage paid return envelope with the questionnaire to those that have not yet responded.

Dave Wacker and Al Godfrey updated the Commission members on the Bureau of Labor Standards Ad-hoc committee reviewing the firefighter safety law.

Bill O’Gara spoke on legislative problems related to multiple entities wanting to have their own special license plates and that it is getting out of hand.

Chairman O’Gara then requested a motion to accept the June 25, 2001 minutes as amended. Motion by Jethro Pease, 2nd by John Cannon that the minutes be accepted including those of the June 11, 2001 meeting was unanimously approved. Steve Willis

requested that the Secretary send corrected and/or approved minutes along with the draft minutes of the latest meeting so that the latest approved minutes would always be available. The Secretary agreed to do this with all minutes in the future.

There was a discussion on the 11 issues needed in the Commission report and it was determined that at the next meeting the members need to develop a work plan for the next 6 or 8 months along with a public hearing plan.

On No. 10 in the bylaws, John Dean will develop information as it connects with No. 2.

There was a discussion on the number of commission members missing from meetings regularly and the problems we are having obtaining a quorum in order to conduct official business. One House member has not been appointed to the Commission. Chairman O’Gara advised that this is not a good time to request an appointment. There was a consensus that we should look at the Criminal Justice and Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committees for this possible member.

A motion was made by Steve Willis, 2nd by Jeff Maker that the Bylaws of the Commission dated June 2001 be accepted. The vote was unanimous.

New Business

John Cannon quoted from the New England Journal of Medicine statistics related to house fires with summaries on elderly, no smoke detectors, etc. Copies of the report will be made and handed out at the next meeting.

Steve Willis spoke on the issue of Junior Firefighters being drastically affected by the new Maine Department of Labor rules. Chairman O’Gara advised that he had met with 7 Cumberland County Fire Chiefs on the issue and their great concerns on the affect the rules have on the future of the fire service. He has spoken with Commissioner Landry at the Department of Labor on the issue and has been advised there will be a public meeting on the issue to try to straighten out the mess. Dave Wacker advised that the ad-hoc committee working on the revision to the firefighter safety law has been asked to spend at least one-half hour at the end of each meeting discussing the Junior Firefighter issue to see what can be worked out.

Dave Wacker asked Commission members to look at the Good Samaritan law relating to firefighters. In 1982, Title 30, Section 3776 covering firefighters exemption from liability was repealed and he can’t find where it was ever put back into the statutes. If anyone can find where it was replaced please advise Dave.

Susan Pinette advised she has 16 volunteers that will check on the questionnaire feedback to insure all those that have not yet responded will be contacted again to try to get 100 percent return.

Jay Bradshaw spoke on the actuarial RFP being developed. Susan Pinette will be working with the sub-committee on this. The sub-committee consists of Jay Bradshaw, John Cannon, Ted Johnston, Randy Keep and Darrel Fournier.

Jay Bradshaw will send out a new roster of members including Susan Pinette our staff member.

Steve Willis reported that the 16 county volunteers to assist Susan Pinette in obtaining 100 percent return on the questionnaires are as follows: Androscoggin – Mike Albert, Aroostook – Richard Cyr, Cumberland – Darrel Fournier, Franklin – Jack Berry, Hancock – Jeff Cammack, Kennebec – Al Godfrey, Knox – Jethro Pease, Lincoln – Steve Willis, Oxford – Jack Berry, Penobscot – Jeff Cammack, Piscataquis – Jeff Cammack,

Sagadahoc – John Cannon, Somerset – Tom Parent, Waldo – Jethro Pease, Washington – Jeff Maker, and York – Harty Norris.

The next meeting of the Commission will be held on Monday, August 13, 2001 at 1:00 P.M. in the same facility. The meetings to follow will be Monday, September 10, 2001 and Monday, September 24, 2001.

With no further discussion to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 2:56 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Albert L. Godfrey, Sr., P.E., P.L.S., C.S.E.
Secretary